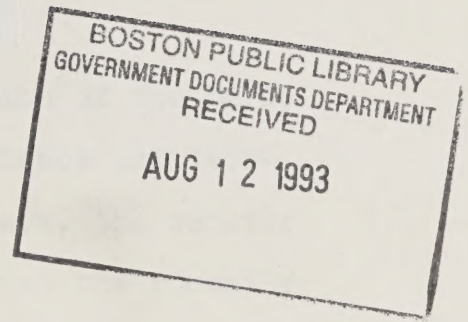
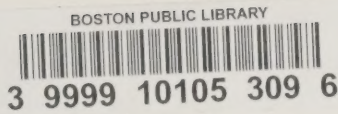




OFFICE OF THE MAYOR
Little City Hall



Boston Citizen Siminar
"Development and Conservation
in Boston's Port and Harbor"

"EAST BOSTON LOOKS AT THE HARBOR"

by Alice Borsa Christopher, Manager
East Boston Little City Hall

I realize that many of you are not familiar with East Boston. As Little City Hall manager in East Boston let me try to establish the relationship between this community and the harbor. Historically its importance as a local shipping center generated employment for the entire community. From the days of Donald McKay's internationally acclaimed clipper ships to the late 1950's East Boston residents enjoyed the economic benefits of its water related industries. Today much of the waterfront is vacant, dilapidated or under-utilized. Employment opportunities and pedestrian access is limited.

In the late 1960's the administration of Boston's Mayor Kevin White realized the potential for unlimited growth for recreational, educational, housing and employment opportunities along the East Boston waterfront for the East Boston community. Since that time a public commitment of millions of dollars toward waterfront develop-

ment has taken place with the construction of the Mario Umana Harborside Community School of Science and Technology, the Jeffries Point Waterfront Park, the Senator Michael LoPresti Sr. Recreation Complex at the recently dedicated North Ferry Waterfront Park and 300 units of elderly housing at the Heritage Apartments in Maverick Square.

This public commitment for the re-vitalization of the East Boston waterfront has generated the private investment of 500 new units of waterfront housing at Shore Plaza East on Border Street and a private developer has recently obtained an option at Mill Wharf, the old National Docks site locally known as NDP 2, with the intention of developing 500 units of market rate housing and 25,000 square feet of retail commercial space along side the mall leading to the old South Ferry Slip in Maverick Square. This development proposal signifies a potential commitment of some 30.8 million dollars, and is certainly a positive sign of private development interest. This property directly abutts the largest single under-utilized parcel of waterfront land along the East Boston waterfront. This 56 acre parcel is owned by the Massachusetts Port Authority and identified as Piers 1-4.

The most critical waterfront concern in East Boston is the divestiture of the Massport piers in accordance with

the Massport Master Plan of 1976. Until this issue is resolved it will continue to be difficult to bring about the desired investor confidence needed to stimulate the revitalization of the East Boston harbor. The future use of this land has been looked at by the Massport Board, the East Boston Land Use Council and the East Boston Chamber of Commerce and preliminary re-use studies have come forth. These reports call for mixed use development. While my opinions vary somewhat from the specifics of each, I concur with the direction they take.

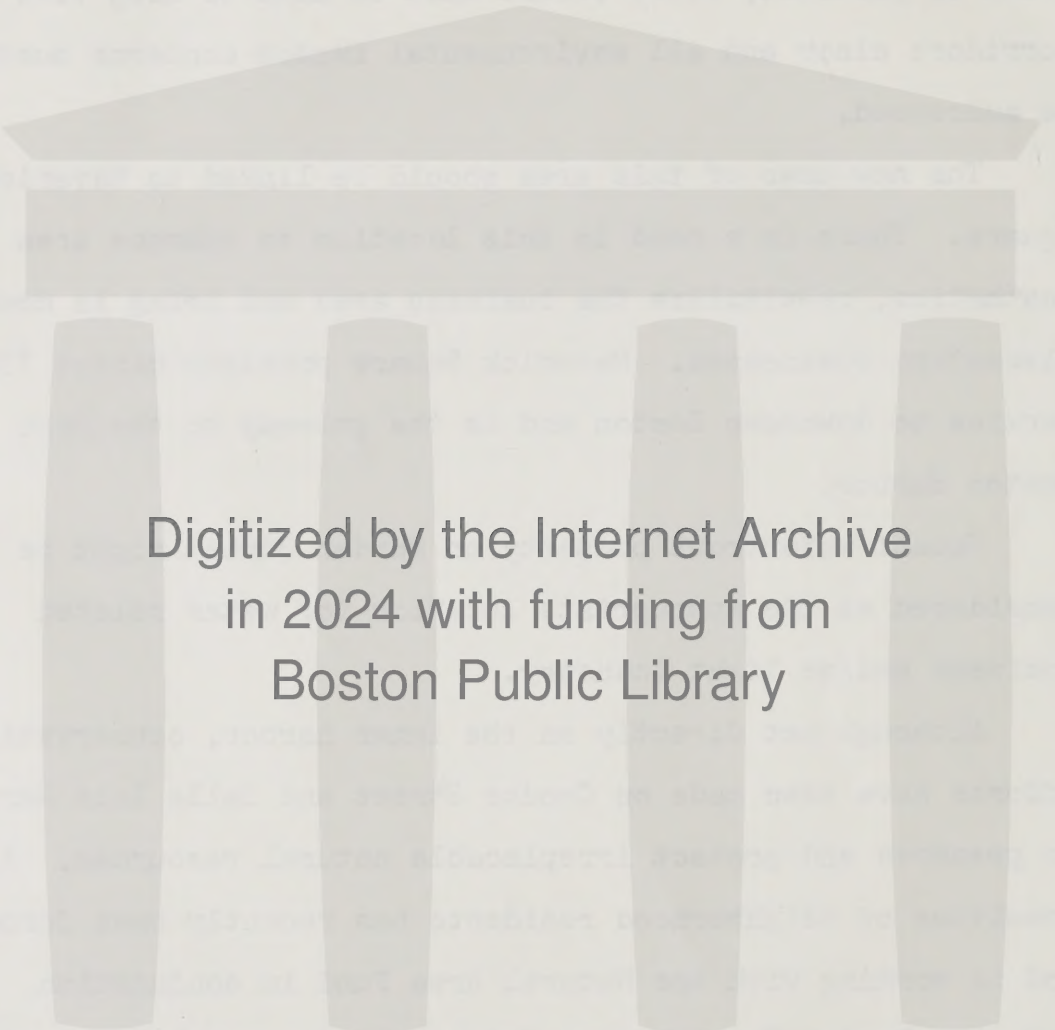
It is important to note at this point that what I am offering are suggestions for future development and do not constitute any existing community or city sanctioned plan or proposal, but are merely illustrative of what might be considered during the planning process. I offer for consideration such things as: a Donald McKay Maritime Museum to display the history of East Boston for all to enjoy, a marina-yacht sales, display, repair, storage complex (such as the Boston Harbor Marina) to stimulate business and employment, expansion of business opportunities for Bethlehem Steel and other local shipyards, a properly designed water related hotel of reasonable scale, a restaurant, a wholesale fish and lobster enterprise, mooring for lobster fishermen in proximity to the wholesaler, a public launching ramp with amenities, a ferry slip which would provide the water

transportation connector to downtown and the possible development of condominium units. However, whatever is developed must preserve as much public access to the waterfront as possible, every effort must be made to keep view corridors clear and all environmental impact concerns must be addressed.

The new uses of this area should be linked to Maverick Square. There is a need in this location to enhance area aesthetics, re-vitalize the business area and bring in complementary businesses. Maverick Square provides direct "T" service to downtown Boston and is the gateway to the East Boston Harbor.

Vacant waterfront property on Border Street might be considered as the appropriate location for water related business and/or light industry.

Although not directly on the inner harbor, conservation efforts have been made on Condor Street and Belle Isle Marsh to preserve and protect irreplaceable natural resources. A committee of neighborhood residents has recently been formed and is working with the Natural Area Fund in conjunction with the Boston Conservation Commission to purchase the old Boston Sand and Gravel site on Condor Street at the Chelsea Creek. Neighborhood efforts have also been made to preserve the Belle Isle Marsh. Actual divestiture of this property from the Massport Authority to the M.D.C. is about to be



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consumated. These two locations are designated as Boston Urban Wilds properties.

The Chelsea Creek waterfront property along McClellan Highway is the location where water related industry and industrial development should occur.

Desirable development could be stimulated by a joint partnership between public and private interests. This can be accomplished through such programs as E.D.A.'s Comprehensive Economic Development Strategy Area Program, H.U.D's Urban Development Action Grant Program, The Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service's (formerly the Bureau of Outdoor Recreation) of the Department of Interior - Urban Parks and Recreation Program and the Massachusetts Coastal Zone Management's Community Assistance Program.

In conclusion, the manner in which the East Boston waterfront is utilized will determine the direction and growth of all of East Boston. Its future utilization will also be of major significance to the city, state and region. Available census data indicates that only 2.1% of East Boston families earn \$25,000 or more per year. Except for the waterfront there has been a lack of private investor confidence in East Boston. The only significant development that has occurred in the past several years has been public, institutional, or private construction of subsidized housing. According to the 1977 Hart Survey, the city wide rate

of unemployment was 11%. In East Boston an 18.9% rate of unemployment was recorded. Taking the above data into consideration, it is clearly evident that if current trends continue, within the next twenty years East Boston will be inhabited primarily by the elderly, people receiving public assistance and the working poor. To stimulate a stagnant economy and improve the overall quality of life, East Boston needs jobs, economic development and residential development that will expand housing options for existing residents and attract upper income residents. The time has come for public agencies and private development to put forth a concerted effort towards the re-development, re-use of the East Boston waterfront, always keeping in mind the importance of balancing residential and business interests.

Waterfront resources in East Boston must be used to help East Boston become an even better place to live, work and play.

